

SEN Green Paper risks young people 'missing out' on specialist expertise

The Children's Services Development Group has expressed surprise that the SEN Green Paper has the potential to deny young people with the most severe special needs access to the expertise and specialist care that they require.

The group welcome the government's focus on reforming the special education system but fear that the measures will have an unintended impact on service provision and will preclude true parental choice.

Independent providers are working with local authorities across the UK to ensure that the best services are available to meet local demand.

However, by expecting parents to choose solely from a menu of maintained provision, young people could miss out on accessing tailored support from an independent special school.

CSDG members strive to help young people achieve the best outcomes through personalised input from expert and well trained staff, delivered in first class settings that receive "outstanding" ratings from Ofsted.

The independent sector will continue to support local authorities to help jointly respond to the changes to the system outlined in the Green Paper.

Brian Jones, representing the CSDG, said: *"As service providers we are concerned with delivering the very best outcomes for young people with severe SEN in the most cost effective way."*

We whole heartedly agree that parents should be free to choose the services that will best match their child's needs but feel that they will be missing out if not able to consider a place in an independent special school - where excellent care and facilities mean that young people with very complex needs are able to make excellent progress towards fulfilled adulthood."

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Notes for Editors

- 1) For more information, please contact Gemma Stockwood: 07835770312, gemma@westminsteradvisers.co.uk.
- 2) The Green Paper states that: *"Parents of children with statements of SEN will be able to express a preference for any state-funded school - including special schools, Academies and Free Schools."*
- 3) The DfE has confirmed that "state-funded" providers will not include independent special schools, despite funding for these places currently coming from the local authority.
- 4) CSDG is a policy coalition of providers of special education, foster and residential care. Its members have national reach working with the vast majority of local authorities and collectively care for over 6,000 children.
- 5) Together, the group campaign for a child-centred and needs focused approach to children's services. The CSDG vision is to place the wellbeing of each child at the forefront of policymaking and to deliver both value for money and excellent outcomes in a challenging public spending climate.